IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method, for use in a virus-free certificate authority (102), of generating a virus-free certificate (200) certifying that a file is virus-free comprising the steps of:

- receiving (300) a virus-free certificate request for a file from a server (101) or a client (100) system, said virus-free certificate request comprising the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested;
- determining (301) whether a virus-free certificate is integrated in the file;

If no virus-free certificate is integrated in the file:

- determining (305) whether the file is virus-free or not;

if the file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102):

- generating (313, 314) a virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207) for certifying that said file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102);
- integrating (316) the generated virus-free certificate (200) in the file;
- sending (316) back in response to the virus-free certificate request the file with the integrated virus-free certificate (200).

2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises:

- a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said file comprised in the virus-free certificate request comprises:

- an integrated virus-free certificate.

4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further steps of:

If the file comprises an integrated virus-free certificate:
- determining (302, 303) whether the virus-free certificate integrated in the file has been previously generated by the virus-free certificate authority.

If the virus-free certificate integrated in the file has been previously generated by the virus-free certificate authority:
- updating (304) the virus-free certificate.

If the virus-free certificate integrated in the file has not been previously generated by the virus-free certificate authority:
- generating (313, 314) a new virus-free certificate.

5. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said file further comprises:

- a file header comprising:
- a non encrypted file signature (501);
- a file length (502);
- a product name (503).

6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of integrating (316) the virus-free certificate (200) in the file comprises the further steps of:

- appending (506) the virus-free certificate to the file;
- modifying a file header, preferably:
- a non encrypted file signature (501);
- a file length (502);

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- a product name (503), said product name comprising means for identifying the integrated virus-free certificate.

7. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of determining whether the file is virus-free or not comprises the further step of:

- executing (301) one or a plurality of anti-virus programs on said file for detecting viruses.

8. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate further comprises:

- a list of the one or plurality of anti-virus programs (208) that have been executed on the file.

9. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate (200) further comprises:

- a file identification (201);
- a virus-free certificate authority identification (202);
- a public key (203) for decrypting the file signature;
- a certificate signature (206) for authenticating the virus-free certificate.

10. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further steps (305) of:

- identifying the server (101) or client (100) system where the file comprising the integrated virus-free certificate is stored;
- updating the file with the integrated virus-free certificate.

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11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of generating (303, 304) a file signature (207) comprises the further steps of:

- hashing the file to generate a file digest;
- encrypting the file digest using a private key.

12. (Currently amended) A system implementing a virus-free certificate authority (102), said system comprising a processor that executes a program for implementing a method having comprising the steps of:
- receiving (300) a virus-free certificate request for a file from a server (101) or a client (100) system, said virus-free certificate request comprising the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested;
- determining (301) whether a virus-free certificate is integrated in the file; If no virus-free certificate is integrated in the file:
- determining (305) whether the file is virus-free or not; if the file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102):
- generating (313, 314) a virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207) for certifying that said file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102);
- integrating (316) the generated virus-free certificate (200) in the file; sending (316) back in response to the virus-free certificate request the file with the integrated virus-free certificate (200).

13. (Currently amended) A computer program recorded on a computer-readable medium and comprising instructions executing a method having comprising the steps of:
- receiving (300) a virus-free certificate request for a file from a server (101) or a client (100) system, said virus-free certificate request comprising the file for which the virus-free certificate is requested;
- determining (301) whether a virus-free certificate is integrated in the file; If no virus-free certificate is integrated in the file:

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- determining (305) whether the file is virus-free or not;

if the file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102):

- generating (313, 314) a virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207) for certifying that said file is declared virus-free by the virus-free certificate authority (102);

- integrating (316) the generated virus-free certificate (200) in the file;

sending (316) back in response to the virus-free certificate request the file with the integrated virus-free certificate (200).

14. (Currently amended) A method, for use in a server (101) or client (100) system, of determining that a file is virus-free comprising the steps of:

- determining (401) whether a virus-free certificate (200) is integrated within a file;

if a virus-free certificate is integrated within the file:

- authenticating (415) the virus-free certificate (200), said virus-free certificate comprising a certificate signature (206);

- authenticating (407) the file, said virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207), said file signature certifying that said file has been declared virus-free by a virus-free certificate authority (102).

15. (Currently amended) The method according claim 14 wherein said step of authenticating (407) the file comprises the further steps of:

- decrypting the file signature (207) using a public key (203) comprised in the virus-free certificate (200).
- hashing the file to generate a file digest;
- comparing the decrypted file signature with the generated file digest.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14 wherein the step of authenticating the virus-free certificate comprises the further step of:

• validating the virus-free certificate.

17. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 16 wherein the step of validating the virus-free certificate comprises the further step of:

• determining whether the virus-free certificate is valid or not;
If the virus-free certificate is not valid:
• requesting a virus-free certificate update or an updated virus-free certificate update to a virus-free certificate authority (102).

18. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 14 wherein the virus-free certificate (200) further comprises:

• a file identification (201);
• a virus-free certificate authority identification (202);
• a public key (203) for decrypting the file signature;

19. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 14 wherein said file further comprises:

• a file header comprising:
• a non encrypted file signature (501) for signing the file;
• a file length (502);
• a product name (503), said product name comprising means for identifying the integrated virus-free certificate.

20. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 14 wherein the step of determining (401) whether a virus-free certificate (200) is integrated within a file comprises the further step of:

- determining whether a product name (503) within a file header comprises means for identifying the integrated virus-free certificate or not.

21. (Currently amended) A system having a processor that determines that a file is virus-free, said processor executing a program for implementing a method having steps of:
- determining (401) whether a virus-free certificate (200) is integrated within a file;

if a virus-free certificate is integrated within the file:
- authenticating (415) the virus-free certificate (200), said virus-free certificate comprising a certificate signature (206);

authenticating (407) the file, said virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207), said file signature certifying that said file has been declared virus-free by a virus-free certificate authority (102).

22. (Currently amended) A computer program recorded on a computer-readable medium and comprising instructions executing a method having steps of:
- determining (401) whether a virus-free certificate (200) is integrated within a file;

if a virus-free certificate is integrated within the file:
- authenticating (415) the virus-free certificate (200), said virus-free certificate comprising a certificate signature (206);

authenticating (407) the file, said virus-free certificate (200) comprising a file signature (207), said file signature certifying that said file has been declared virus-free by a virus-free certificate authority (102).